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TAGS: PREL MOPS MARR NATO FR AF PA SE
SUBJECT: READOUT OF U/S BURNS AND USDP FLOURNOY'S
POLITICAL-MILITARY DISCUSSIONS IN PARIS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, Mark A. Pekala for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C/NF) Summary. During a series of political-military discussions in Paris on May 14 between U/S Burns and USDP Flournoy with their French counterparts Gerard Araud and Michel Miraillet, the French pledged support for our non-proliferation efforts with North Korea and Russia and urged close cooperation in the next 12 months as we prepare for the 2010 review conference for the NPT treaty. French officials expressed interest in the ongoing reviews of missile defense, noting their support for USG bilateral efforts to establish a third MD site in Europe but cautioning that the potential costs of a NATO MD program could be prohibitive and that current European defense budgets could not support it. Paris is gearing up for the OSCE informal ministerial in Corfu in June and has circulated a draft paper with the Germans, UK and U.S. to reach agreement on some basic principles for discussion. France further supports reform of NATO institutions to facilitate committee work and streamline the Alliance's organizational structure. French and U.S. officials agreed on concerns over the security situation in the Pakistan Swat Valley and increasing refugee crisis. On the Balkans, France considers that the Office of the High Representative (OHR) should be phased out after the upcoming October meeting of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC), and replaced by an EU Special Representative. The GOF and USG representatives also discussed additional approaches to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden and how to increase bilateral cooperation in space and on cyber deterrence. End Summary.

NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT

¶2. (S/NF) Both Araud and Miraillet expressed strong support for U.S. efforts to dissuade North Korea's nuclear program, acknowledging that France is not on the "front-lines" of this issue. Burns and Flournoy expressed appreciation for France's support on the UN Security Council, hoping that they would be able to tighten some procedures and proceed with new designations through that organization. At the same time, Flournoy said that the U.S. was reviewing new initiatives to strengthen our solidarity and alliances with other countries in the region to demonstrate that any DPRK provocation merely serves to isolate Pyongyang and strengthen our common front. She also suggested strengthening implementation of PSI, to which the French agreed. Miraillet raised concerns of

Egyptian missile cooperation with DPRK and asked whether we had any evidence of possible DPRK cooperation with Myanmar. All agreed that we "must be tough" in PSI, within the UN and with Russia on the Montchegorsk case.

BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

¶ 13. (C/NF) Paris is very focused on the NPT prepcom meetings in New York to prepare for the 2010 review conference. Araud stated that, as President Sarkozy announced in a speech last March, France is ready to make concrete steps as part of disarmament efforts. However, he cautioned that countries without nuclear weapons and NGOs will continue to pocket any concessions made and then put forth further demands as only a zero policy will satisfy them. He asked for close cooperation with the U.S. in establishing "redlines" for the nuclear countries and ensuring a balanced agenda that includes proliferation threats from Iran and North Korea as well as verification challenges. MFA Strategic Affairs Director Jacques Audibert added that based on the current discussions, France sees problems with the text of the document as well as pressure being applied to do more. He stated that, based on recent steps taken to dismantle test and fissile materials sites, France has the best record of nuclear states in disarmament efforts. In addition, France is concerned that some proposals for verification could cost billions of dollars and it also wants to ensure that countries are able to exercise their right to peaceful use of power.

¶ 14. (C/NF) USDP Flournoy clarified that there are three main principles behind the USG nuclear and disarmament policy articulated by President Obama in Prague: (1) strengthening the non-proliferation regime, including ratification of the CTBT treaty; (2) reducing our own nuclear arsenal (primarily through new START negotiations with Russia); and (3) maintaining a nuclear deterrence that is robust, safe and reliable. These three pillars are all crucial elements to our policy and move in parallel with each other. Both Burns and Flournoy expressed desire for successful START negotiations with Russia, but cautioned that a follow-on treaty would only encompass modest reductions with deeper reductions deferred until a later stage. ASD Vershbow added that France should consider rejoining NATO's Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) which would give it another forum to influence wavering allies. Araud responded that he was unclear where France currently stands on rejoining NPG.

MISSILE DEFENSE

¶ 15. (S/NF) GOF officials were very interested in current U.S. plans for missile defense in Europe. USDP Flournoy noted that Secretary Gates 2010 defense budget showed a shift in investment from national to regional and theater missile defense programs. At the same time, we are engaging in a congressionally-mandated missile defense review. While the USG remains interested in missile defense for Europe, we are also taking Russian concerns seriously and trying to re-set our broader relationship with Moscow, so we are looking at different options. To give the new administration maximum flexibility, however, the 2010 budget has allocated funding for a third missile defense site in Europe. We'd also like to increase missile defense cooperation with NATO and believe the ALTBMD represents a good beginning. The U.S. is also interested in exploring bilateral missile defense opportunities with France, to take advantage of their strong industrial and technological base. We'd like to continue exploring use of French facilities associated with the Atlantic test range. Flournoy added that we remain interested in finding protection for the southern flank of Europe and U/S Burns noted that the pace of the Iran missile program was surprising to many, including the Russians.

¶ 16. (S/NF) Araud stated that he had engaged on numerous

occasions with the Russians in order to better understand their missile defense concerns. Aside from not wanting to see the American flag based in its former satellite countries, all of Araud's Russian interlocutors had clarified that U.S. missile defense plans were "only the first step" in a global system. They also said the radar in the Czech Republic looks deeply into Russia and can observe Russian missile testing. As for NATO missile defense, Araud noted that, while Paris had never opposed the U.S. missile defense plans, there were concerns about the potential costs of the program. He added that he was surprised at the number of NATO allies willing to approve a program when there was clearly "not one euro" to pay for it with current defense budgets. France would require clear funding in order to approve a NATO plan. Since France is still implementing its 2008 "white paper," its own defense funding has "dire constraints." So, while Paris supports current discussions and developments at NATO, the key question remains money.

EUROPEAN SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

¶7. (S/NF) French officials are very focused on the informal OSCE Ministerial scheduled for Corfu in June to discuss European security. Araud stated that the Europeans are very divided on this subject and that the recent meeting of EU Political Directors had been very tense, with strong opposing positions. The U.S. position will be critical to unify EU countries. The GOF has circulated a paper within the Quad laying out some of the major redlines for discussion, including: the importance of the transatlantic link, keeping current security architecture, including a broad vision of security, focusing renewed emphasis on the Helsinki principles, addressing new ways to cope with crisis

prevention and crisis management and discussion of what to do about CFE (whether to keep the current version or to consider other alternatives). They are waiting for the USG reaction to plan next steps. U/S Burns agreed that it is important to take the initiative on this discussion of European security and that the French paper is a good starting point.

¶8. (S/NF) Araud was very pessimistic about the CFE treaty, saying that he sees no way to save CFE now, even if no one wants to say so publicly. Currently, the Russians have the best of both worlds since the occidental countries are still implementing its provisions, but Russia is not. Further, the allies will not accept an asymmetrical flank regime where they submit to limits while Russia has none. Araud suggested that we get into "brainstorming mode" on what Europe really needs for its security and then try to discuss it more broadly after the September German federal elections. The U.S. delegation noted that it was in our own interest to make the system function and that we will want to keep the CFE structure, even if we move forward with discussions on alternatives. Doing so may give us leverage with the Russians on other issues, but USDP Flournoy warned that she did not want to give Russia "a new piece of paper which would relieve them of their obligations under existing treaties" and that alternatives shouldn't focus solely on "red lines" but also on lines of opportunity.

NATO STRATEGIC CONCEPT

¶9. (C/NF) USDP Flournoy stated that most NATO allies view the launch of the new Strategic Concept as long overdue. The last one has not kept pace with changes in the new security environment. The U.S. wants a "wise persons" group to consult very widely to compile the views of Allies, which will be used by SecGen to draft the concept, rather than try to draft it by committee. We are focused on maintaining the credibility of Article 5, dealing with new security threats, the future of NATO's open door, NATO's relationship with other organizations such as the EU, NATO internal reform and the Alliance's commitment to capabilities development. Araud

cautioned that defining Article 5 more precisely as some countries would like, would weaken it. The current structure of the NATO treaty, with only 10 Articles, gives NATO the flexibility to redefine itself easily. France wants to see an emphasis on NATO intervention as a comprehensive approach and to address the criteria for NATO enlargement, since there are now several different processes to join the Alliance. France also counts itself among the "reform wing" of NATO, and Araud criticized the military structure of NATO which appears designed to "give jobs to Lithuanian colonels" over other operational priorities. He questioned the necessity of consensus within NATO's working committees and advocated reforms to allow various proposals to come out of committee rather than having one country block all action. Consensus within the NAC would still be "sacred."

¶10. (C/NF) USDP Flournoy asked if French officials had any suggestions on how to overcome the NATO-EU logjam. Araud expressed great frustration with Turkey because it is not willing to work informally to overcome obstacles. He said that France had made efforts during its EU presidencies in both 2000 and 2008 to improve cooperation with Turkey, but with out much success. The Europeans cannot bring Turkey into the European Defense Agency because of the Cypriot veto, but they have just admitted Turkey as an observer in the European Gendarmerie Force. However, he concluded that none of these efforts had been of much help. ASD Vershbow suggested that perhaps now is the time to make a concerted effort for a Cyprus settlement, and he encouraged the EU to design some incentives for Greece and Cyprus to achieve it.

AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN

¶11. (C/NF) U/S Burns led the discussion on Afghanistan/Pakistan by acknowledging the depth of the challenge presented in the region, and the need to improve communication and coordination between Pakistani and Afghan

officials. The deteriorating security situation in the Swat Valley remains a particular concern. U/S Burns said USG efforts sought to build political cover for the political leadership in Pakistan, commenting on the added challenge caused by the raw feelings between President Zardari and Nawaz Sharif. USDP Flournoy added that the USG was under no illusion that there was a quick fix at hand, but underscored the urgency of the security situation. She discussed her concerns that Pakistani efforts in Swat are exacerbating the IDP situation. It was not clear whether the Pakistanis would be effective in "holding" and "building" and "clearing" Taliban forces from Swat.

¶12. (C/NF) Araud said that a Pakistani delegation would be in Paris tomorrow to discuss counter insurgency (COIN) and Special Forces training. The French government plans to offer COIN cooperation, and promised to coordinate French efforts with the U.S. and UK to ensure consistency of the overall effort. On the issue of Pakistani security assistance, the French voiced some frustration that the Pakistanis ask for equipment, but are reluctant to accept any condition-based assistance. U/S Burns and USDP Flournoy both described the challenges for Pakistan to break from their ingrained views of the strategic threat coming from India versus the Afghan border region, and the enormous importance of Pakistan making that leap. GOF officials said that other donors to Pakistan from the Gulf States view the challenges differently, but all agreed that their participation is important to crafting and financing a viable solution. In response to a question from the French MOD, U/S Burns said that the USG hoped for the resumption of back-channel communications between Pakistan and India, but that the United States had to move cautiously and not be seen as too intrusive.

¶13. (C/NF) On Afghanistan, the French described their efforts to concentrate military and civilian cooperation in the two regions where French soldiers are operating. By increasing their aid to 40 million Euros this year, they hope

to see real progress over the next year in agriculture and rural development. Araud also discussed efforts to deploy a European Gendarmerie Force mission to Afghanistan to provide mentoring and training to the Afghan police. He described coordination challenges owing to the domestic political feuding between the Italian Defense and Foreign Ministers, but said that the pan-European response (now involving French, Italian, Spanish and Dutch gendarmes) was worth the effort. Italy continues to contend that the EGF mission, which will be comprised of 400 gendarmerie, not be approved until the formal standing up of NTM-A at the June Defense Ministerial.

THE BALKANS

¶14. (C/NF) Araud expressed the French view that the Office of the High Representative (OHR) should be phased out after the upcoming October meeting of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC), even if the 5-plus-2 conditions were not completely fulfilled with the OHR, and replaced by a EU Special Representatives, adding that "the military mission on the ground is over." Believing that the OHR is now part of the problem, Araud said that the EU would be discussing its position on the EU Special Representative in the coming weeks, and that it wants to find a way to maintain U.S., Russian and Turkish engagement. On the status of EUFOR, Araud described the ongoing challenges to Italian and Spanish forces in Bosnia whose military forces continue to be deployed, often at the badgering of EU countries that have removed their own forces from the region. EUR Acting A/S Marcie Ries said that the United States was not convinced that satisfactory progress had been made on the 5-plus-2 commitments to warrant closure of the OHR, and said that we remain concerned about the corrosive influence of resurgent nationalism in the region. Both sides agreed to continue our dialogue after VP Biden's trip to the region next week. Araud said that the French did not want a "Dayton II," and commented that the Bosnian constitution was "artificial and fragile, but the Bosnians are used to it." Nonetheless, he said that he believes the current impasse between RS leader Dodik and Bosniak leadership was unworkable.

¶15. (C/NF) Araud said that Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece, represent the three necessary poles for stability in the Caucuses. Araud hoped that the EU would improve its relations with Belgrade, since the Serbs had voted by a large margin in each of their last two elections for pro-European parties. Araud was quick to point out that the Serbs are guilty of double talk, and was especially critical of FM Jeremic's efforts to play both sides. He added that Tadic understands that Jeremic is a problem but cannot dismiss him for domestic political reasons. Araud briefly described the GOF's views on Macedonia, which he described as a "dead end." On the border dispute between Croatia and Slovenia, Araud said that Slovenia was prepared to block a potential compromise solution at hand with the EU and requested Washington's help with pushing Ljubljana towards compromise. The EU Commission would soon provide a new, slightly-amended version, but that was "the end of the road." Summing up the frustration an MFA colleague had with the Slovenian's stubbornness, Araud said Czech FM Schwartzenberg had commented "never underestimate the charms of petty nationalism."

COUNTER-PIRACY

¶16. (C/NF) Both U.S. and French officials agreed that the situation in the Gulf of Aden is complicated and requires a comprehensive approach. Araud informed the U.S. officials that France had decided to train a battalion of Somali soldiers in Djibouti, to help improve security. U/S Burns shared that the G-8 Political Directors had discussed other ideas, including increasing judicial capacity, training of Somali forces and possible steps that commercial ships can take to better avoid the pirates. USDP Flournoy added that

the paying of ransoms has created a commercial market that the international community should try to change with incentives. Further, given the resources needed to protect commercial shipping, it may be more economical for ships to learn to take some simple, active defensive measures such as blocking exits, learning evasive maneuvers and increasing speed. We must still address what to do with the pirates we have apprehended, as countries have varying laws on capture and jurisdiction.

BILATERAL COOPERATION

¶17. (C/NF) GOF and U.S. officials also discussed a variety of additional areas for bilateral cooperation, including nuclear, space and cyber issues. Araud stressed the importance of cyber deterrence for the French, noting that cyber attacks that took place during the visit of the Dalai Lama to France and the fact that French computers were used unwittingly in cyber attacks on Georgia during the Georgia-Russia crisis last summer. The GOF would like to share legal, doctrinal and policy experiences in this area. At the end of the meetings, the U.S. and Frances signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Space Cooperation between the U.S. Department of Defense and the French Ministry of Defense.

¶18. (U) THis cable was cleared by U/S Burns and USDP Flournoy.

PEKALA